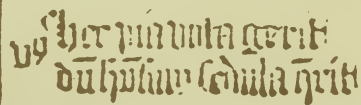
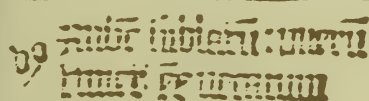


Item in lib^o salotis ant^o cor
in. ca. de ipa h^osa q^u q^uerit
sunt dilan. aut^o q^uoniam q^u dicit
aia mea est v^o tuum illi h^o
h^osa hancu^m ut^o ut^o m^o m^o
magis est q^u h^o dilan q^u est
int^o m^o m^o est p^o p^o u^o
otto m^o m^o

३॥॥

Et
Ite missa est



Salutare tuū ex p̄tato

¶ Dominus miles: petriū dūcet āgulus iste

Cover illustration: The thirtieth leaf of Edition VII of the *Biblia Pauperum*.

BLOCK-PRINTING

Some Examples in the
Brigham Young University Library Collections

FRIENDS OF
THE BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
PROVO, UTAH

1987

Research and Text
by Randy Richards

Cover Design by
Marsha Lee Sawyer

Edited by
A. Dean Larsen

Block printing was developed more than a thousand years ago in the Far East. It spread to Europe a century or more before the invention of movable type. Block prints usually consisted of single pictures, characters, or letters printed from carved or engraved slabs of wood.

Although Europe considers the invention of typography as the beginning of the age of printing, China dates this beginning to the time when block-printing was first developed. This is very logical because the European languages are based upon a relatively simple alphabet, and thus typography was a convenient and efficient advancement in European printing. However, Chinese and other languages of the Far East depend upon thousands of separate symbols. Having so many characters to be concerned with, block-printing was really more feasible than a system of movable types. It was simply faster to carve the symbols into a block of wood and print, than it would have been to sort and arrange thousands of characters.

During the Chinese golden age in the eighth century, AD, *“a great variety of devices was being evolved in the Buddhist monasteries of China for the reduplication of sacred books and texts - an activity that reached its climax in block printing some time before the end of the golden age.”*¹

The Chinese method of block-printing was extremely proficient and highly artistic.

The material employed for the blocks was generally a soft wood such as pear or apple tree. The wooden plank was squared to the shape and dimensions required. The surface was then rubbed over with paste or size made of boiled rice.

The text or picture was finely transcribed or drawn on thin transparent paper, which was pasted face down, and so inverted, on to the block. Such was the thinness of the paper that the lines of the text or picture shone through. The block-cutter then backed away that portion of the surface which was not covered by ink, leaving the characters or pictures in high relief. The block was then covered with a thin watery ink and the impression was taken by placing a sheet of paper on the inked surface and pressing it down by rubbing the back with a brush or frotton. So expert and expeditious are the Chinese block printers that it is possible for one man to take off two thousand copies a day:

*The block was generally of sufficient size to provide for two pages of text. The paper being thin it was only printed on one side, so that each sheet gave two printed pages, which were folded back so as to bring the blank sides in inward contact. The fold being at the outer edge of the book the sheets were stitched together in that order.*²

The earliest well-defined example of block-printing available comes from Japan and can be dated at about 770 A.D. One Japanese scholar explains the great influence that China had upon Japan during this period when he writes that *“during the eighth and ninth centuries there was scarcely anything good in Si-an-fu, the great T’ang capital,*

¹Thomas Francis Carter, *The Invention of Printing in China and Its Spread Westward*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1925), p.29.

²Ibid., p. 26.

that was not introduced into Japan or copied by the Japanese in their capital at Nara sooner or later. . . . We can trace all this back to the Chinese origin of Japanese Buddhism.'³

In this year (770 A.D.), the Japanese Empress Shotoku ordered that one million Buddhist charms, usually referred to as Dharani Scrolls, be printed and placed inside an equal number of tiny pagodas. These tiny prints were transliterated from Sanskrit language sounds, and were represented by Chinese characters. The charms themselves are about eighteen inches long by two wide. Each contains about thirty lines of five characters each. They are not all alike, as six different charms were printed, paralleling the six different sections of the *Vimala Nirbhava Sutra* (Japanese: *Mu-ku Jo-ko Kyo*). Two different kinds of paper were used, one thick and of a woolly texture, the other thinner and harder, with a smooth surface; which did not absorb the ink quite so readily. The paper of both kinds is brown with age.⁴

THE DHARANI SCROLLS

The text of these charms was taken from the *Sutra: Vimala Suddha Prabhava Mabadharani* (Japanese: *Mu-ku Zho-Kwo Dai Dharani Kyo*). The *Sutra* is "a section of the Buddhist Scriptures in roll form. It consists of a number of discourses of Buddha to his aged disciple Subbuti; on the subject of the non-existence of all things . . . Again and again the Buddha is represented as describing to Subbuti the infinite merit and rewards to be gained by them who transcribe the book and thus spread abroad its doctrine. The transcription of this sacred text became a favorite method of acquiring merit among the Buddhists."⁵

Thomas Carter (1882-1925) explains that "when in 705 the *Sutra* was translated into Chinese by Mi T'osban - sixty years before the printing of charms in Japan only the narrative portions were translated. The charms were merely transliterated, the Sanskrit sounds being represented as nearly as possible by Chinese characters. It is these Sanskrit charms in Chinese characters that were printed and rolled up and placed in the wooden pagodas."⁶

The purpose of these charms was to extend the life of a disciple of Buddha. It was believed that by making, distributing, and honoring the pagodas with their enclosed charms, one's life would be lengthened and one's sins would be forgiven. Although some teachings from Buddha required only seventy-seven of these pagodas, other teachings

³The Nestorian Monument, quoted in Thomas Francis Carter, *The Invention of Printing in China and Its Spread Westward*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1925), pp. 33-34.

⁴Carter, *The Invention of Printing in China*, p. 36.

⁵Henry Guppy, *Stepping-Stones to the Art of Typography* (Manchester: The University Press, 1928), p.18.

⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.



The Dharani Scrolls (inset) with the wooden pagodas which house them.

from the Buddhisattva (a being that compassionately refrains from entering nirvana in order to save others and is worshipped as a deity in Mahayana Buddhism⁷) required ninety-nine. The Empress Shotoku did not want to take any chances, so she ordered a million copies of the charm. However, the empress's probable desire for a long life went unfulfilled, for she died about the time that the pagodas were distributed. Fortunately, though, her religious convictions firmly established the art of block-printing in Japan and introduced what has been labeled as one of the "*world's greatest civilizing forces*."⁸

The BYU Library owns two Dharani scrolls. One of the scrolls is 18 1/2 inches long and 2 3/8 inches wide. It has 31 lines with 5 characters to each line. This charm is in its original pagoda, or Hyakumanto, and is of the Jhinsin variety. It was presented to BYU by Mr. and Mrs. Walter L. Bush who purchased it through the Charles Tuttle Company from Mr. Paul Blum directly from the Horiuji temple.⁹ The other Dharani scroll in BYU's collection has 34 lines with 5 characters to each line and is 38 by 5 1/2 centimeters. It is of the Sorin variety and is also in its original pagoda. This charm was purchased in Japan by Harry F. Bruning, a prominent San Francisco collector, and was secured when the Library acquired part of his extensive collections. This specific charm has been mounted on gold paper and is missing a small portion of the text.¹⁰

Although it is certain that the art of block-printing in Europe also owes its beginnings to the Chinese, it is uncertain whether the first western examples of this type of printing came through religious pictures or playing cards. The earliest references to cards in Europe are warnings and prohibitions of the vice of card-playing. However, these warnings did not deter the general public, because at the end of the fourteenth century, card-playing was extremely popular.

An interesting story concerning playing-cards offers one explanation for the development of religious prints:

A climax seems to have been reached in May, 1423, if the story related by Schreiber is to be believed, when Saint Bernardino of Siena preached a famous sermon from the steps of St. Peter's at Rome against card-playing. The saint, according to the story, preached with such effect that his hearers rushed to their houses, brought back such cards and games of bazard as they possessed to the public square, where they were burnt. Whereupon, one card maker, who felt that his business had been ruined by the sermon, went in tears to the saint. Father, said he, I am a card maker and know no other trade. You have forbidden me to make cards, and have condemned me and my family to die of starvation. Said St. Bernardino: If you know how to paint, paint this image, showing him the image of Christ with the monogram "I.H.S" in the centre of a halo of glory:

The source of the story is not given, but it is of interest as having given rise to the suggestion that religious prints were intended as a corrective, which counteracted the vice of card-playing¹¹

⁷ Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, (1981), s.v. "Boddhisattva."

⁸ Carter, *The Invention of Printing in China*, p. 38.

⁹ Dharani, Japan, 770 A.D.

¹⁰ Dharani, Japan, 770 A.D.

¹¹ Carter, *The Invention of Printing in China*, pp. 28-29.

Religious block-prints and broadsides (sheets of paper printed on one or both sides and folded), became very popular in Europe in the fifteenth century. They were often sold to travelers on religious pilgrimages. These prints usually portrayed popular saints such as St. Anthony, St. Christopher, and St. George. There were also religious prints made of famous biblical scenes such as the Annunciation, the Nativity, and scenes surrounding the Crucifixion. Although these prints were often crudely done, and were usually copies of other pictures, they also provide a clear insight to popular forms of religious devotion in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

An important example owned by the library is a religious block print, mounted inside a copy of the *Prague Missal*.¹² The Missal itself is extremely rare, with only two known copies: the one at the BYU Library is the only copy in America.¹³ In the *Missal*, the canon of the mass has been printed

RELIGIOUS BLOCK PRINT

on vellum. The block-print was inserted to appear as the first page of this section. The print is most likely of Southern German origin and depicts the crucifixion scene. Christ is nailed on the cross, with the two Marys weeping at his feet. Appearing near each of the wounds on Christ's body is a cherub who catches the blood of Christ in a chalice or goblet. At one time the print may have been mounted on a wall. The corners have been torn away in a fashion that suggests this conclusion. Fortunately, it has been preserved within the pages of this rare *Missal*.

Block-prints led to the development of block-books. Block-books were printed in much the same way as the earlier Chinese prints. They were printed on only one side of the paper, pasted back to back, and then compiled into books. Douglas C. McMurtrie (1888-1944) postulates that the

*purpose of the early block books was to popularize the stories or teachings of the Bible in pictorial form, which even those who could read, or could read but little, might comprehend. Most of them were first made up in hand-drawn and handwritten form and duplicated in the same manner. When the xylograppers began to cut the pages of these books on wood blocks, they faced no problems of design or authorship. All they had to do was to obtain a hand-drawn copy as a model, trace it, and cut the picture and lettering on the wood. Some of the extant manuscript forerunners of the block-books are dated as early as 1350.*¹⁴

¹²Catholic Church, *Missale Pragense* (Nuremberg: Georg Stuchs, 14980.)

¹³Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (c1981) defines a *Missal* as a book that contains all that is said or sung at mass during the entire year.

¹⁴Douglas C. McMurtrie, *The Book: The Story of Printing & Bookmaking* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1943), p. 114.



Protat block print inserted into the BYU copy of the *Prague Missal*.



E igitur clementissime
pater per iesum xpm
filiū tuū dñm nostrū
supplices rogam⁹ et
optinamus: uti accepta
habeas ⁊ benedicas. **N**ec to **✠** na
Nec mu **✠** nera. **N**ec sacro **✠** sā
cta sacrificia illibata. **E**n primis
que tibi offerim⁹ p ecclesia tuā scā
catholica: quā pacificare. custodire
adunare ⁊ regere digneris toto orbe
terrae: una cū famulo tuo papa no
stro **A**. antistite nrō **A**. rege nrō **A**.
⁊ omib⁹ orthodoxis atq; catholice ⁊
aplice fidei cultorib⁹. **M**emento dñe
famulorū famularūq; tuarum **A**.

One of the most famous block-books is the *Biblia Pauperum*, or Pauper's Bible. Charles H. Middleton-Wake (1828-1915) suggests that these books were probably the finest example of block printing of their period because of "[their] xylographic text, the manner and composition of [their] illustrations, [their] legendary and suggestive history, [their] probable origin, [their] presumed authorship, and [their] distinctive popularity."¹⁵

According to McMurtrie,

[The] intention of the work was to furnish a series of pictorial representations of certain important events in the Life and Passion of our Lord, and to these were added typical scenes or figures relating in some way to the subject, and selected mostly from the Old Testament, or occasionally from sacred legendary history. The principal designs occupy the centre of the page. On either side, the compartments divided by a pillar, some event of typical or parallel character is represented. Above the central design is a double arched compartment, on a smaller scale, with half-length figures of prophets or saints whose names are inserted below; and like figures are pictured in a corresponding compartment beneath the central design. Connected with these figures are labels or scrolls bearing legendary or prophetic inscriptions; in the upper right and left of the composition are xylographic lines of explanatory text, and below the scenes represented in the principal compartments are short descriptive lines in leonine or rhyming Latin verse. The lettering is in Gothic character, and is produced not from type, but from the engraved woodblock.¹⁶

BIBLIA PAUPERUM

A completed *Biblia Pauperum* consists of a series of forty woodcuts, containing pictures and brief text, both engraved on the same block of wood from which an impression was made with very thin brown ink, on one side only of a sheet of paper. The BYU Library is the proud possessor of one leaf from this impressive work. The leaf has special bibliographic and historical importance. It has been described in detail by Wilhelm Schreiber.¹⁷ A peculiar feature of it allowed him to form his now well-accepted theory concerning the techniques used in printing block-books. Because some of the leaves, including this one, have unusually wide margins, the left margin sometimes shows the impression of the outer frame of the adjoining page. This impression led Schreiber to conjecture that two pages were cut onto each block, but that only one was printed at a time with the help of a froton (a burnisher used for rubbing the back of the paper in block-printing). The paper frame used to keep the margins free from printing ink slipped in some cases, resulting in the impression of the outer frame of the adjoining page.¹⁸

¹⁵Charles H. Middleton-Wake, *The Invention of Printing: A Series of Four Lectures Delivered in the Lent Term of 1897*. (London, John Murray, Albermarle Street, 1897), p. 43.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 43-44

¹⁷Wilhelm Ludwig Schreiber, *Handbuch der Holz- und Metallschnitte des XV. Jahrhunderts*. (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann; Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1969), 10 volumes.

¹⁸An in depth explanation of the formation of this theory may be found in W.L. Schreiber's *Manuel de l'amateur de la gravure sur bois IV*, p. 6; or Hind's *An Introduction to a History of Woodcut I*, p. 237.

According to Schreiber's classification, the specific leaf that the library possesses is the thirtieth leaf of Edition VII, of which only two copies, both incomplete, survive. One is in Vienna, and the other (from which this leaf originates) was formerly in Schreiber's own collection. The central scene depicts the three Marys and the angel at the sepulchre. To the left is a picture of Reuben searching for Joseph in the well, and to the right is the daughter of Zion searching for her spouse. As in each leaf of the *Biblia Pauperum*, these three stories parallel each other. The main story comes from the New Testament and deals specifically with the life of Christ. The other two stories are from the Old Testament and serve as prefigures or types of the New Testament account.

The scriptural account of the center picture of this leaf is found in Matthew, Chapter 28. Here, Matthew explains, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary come to the tomb where Christ has been buried, very early on the first morning after the sabbath. These two women then receive a glorious vision as they witness the descent of an angel and watch him roll back the stone to reveal that Christ is no longer in the tomb. Sensing the dismay of the two women, the angel utters the simple and beautiful words: "He is not here: for he is risen." (Matthew 28:6), the first testimony of the resurrection of the Lord.

In the story of Reuben and Joseph, found in Genesis, Chapter 37, Joseph is thrown into a pit by his brothers because he is favored by their father Israel. At first, the brethren plot to slay their younger brother, but the eldest, Reuben, intervenes. They cast him instead into a pit, after stripping him of his precious coat of many colors. Soon, the brothers see a company of Ishmaelites traveling to Egypt and they decide to sell their brother to them for twenty pieces of silver. When Reuben returns to the well, as is depicted in this leaf, Joseph is gone, and the eldest brother experiences incredible sorrow for the wicked deed they have done.

The Joseph/Reuben story prefigures the resurrection in that Christ was also sold by the hands of those that should have been his friends, and was taken away. Reuben, similar to the two Marys, returns to find his beloved brother, only to realize that he is gone. As Christ's removal and resurrection offers salvation to all, Joseph's captivity and rise to power in Egypt later offers salvation to his family.

In the third scene, a woman travels alone with a handkerchief raised to her face. She is crying, the scene has been described as a daughter of Zion searching for her husband. The most extensive story of the daughters of Zion can be found in the third and fourth chapters of Isaiah. In these passages, the prophet Isaiah writes that the daughters of Zion "*are haughty and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet*" (Isaiah 3:16). Isaiah then describes how the Lord will smite these proud women with physical ailments as well as the death of their husbands who shall be killed in war. The lamenting and

mourning of the daughters of Zion is captured on this leaf as this particular daughter of Zion searches for her lost husband. Just as the other two stories teach of a loss and then a salvation, Isaiah explains how the Lord “shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion” (Isaiah 4:4), and Israel shall be cleansed and saved.

Thus, both Old Testament stories serve as types or foreshadowings of the New Testament account of the life of Christ. This is not only artistically interesting, but also religiously stimulating. Many people do not recognize the fact that the Old Testament is a direct foreshadowing of the life and testimony of Christ; yet the religious leaders of the fifteenth century understood that the Old Testament stories point directly to the life of the Savior, and they wanted their ministers as well as the general public to know this too.

With the rise of printing with movable type, in the second half of the fifteenth century, block-printing did not suddenly disappear. In fact, in some instances the two methods were combined, with illustrations made from the block-prints and text from the movable type. One of the most important works which incorporated these two printing methods was Hartmann Schedel's *Liber Chronicarum*, more popularly known as the *Nuremberg Chronicle*. In 1493 a folio edition in Latin was published, followed by a German translation in the same year.

NUREMBERG CHRONICLE

In his book, *The Nuremberg Chronicle Designs*, Adrian Wilson (1923-) describes the *Nuremberg Chronicle* as “a compendium of history, geography and the wonders of the world as viewed from medieval Nuremberg, with some 1800 illustrations provided by the multiple use, for different subjects, of 645 woodblocks. The 270 kings are depicted by 44 blocks of crowned heads, and 28 different effigies supply the images for 226 popes. The single woodcut of an urban scene of the time is used to depict cities as diverse as Mainz and Naples.”¹⁹ This repetitive use is due, at least in part, to the fact that in the fifteenth century there was still a lingering medieval regard for symbol over reality, and token representatives for the kings, popes, and cities were esteemed as valuable as original woodcuts for every illustration. *The Nuremberg Chronicle* attempts to record history from the time of God's creation of the world to the day of the book's publication.

The historical information, combined with religious understanding of the day, was gathered by Hartmann Schedel (1440-1514), from various tracts and annals of ancient historians. A translation from Latin to German was accomplished by the city-council scribe of Nuremberg, Georg Alt (1450-1510). The texts were ornamented and illustrated

¹⁹Adrian Wilson, *The Nuremberg Chronicle Designs*. (San Francisco: Printed for members of the Roxburghe Club of San Francisco and the Zamorano Club of Los Angeles, 1969), p.5.



Creation scene from the 1493 *Nuremberg Chronicle*.

by Michael Wolgemut (1434-1519), and Wilhelm Pleydenwurff (d. 1494). Publication was accomplished by the immensely successful stationer and bookseller, Anton Koberger (1440-1513).

The BYU Library possesses both the 1493²⁰ and 1497²¹ Latin editions. Many interesting facts concerning this work are found by examining its woodcuts. For example, the cut depicting Noah's Ark looks nothing like the biblical description of the ark. Instead, it more closely resembles a sailing ship of the fifteenth century. The people depicted in the woodcuts, with the exception of Adam and Eve (who are naked), are clothed in

²⁰Hartman Schedel, *Liber Chronicarum* (Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1493).

²¹Hartmann Schedel, *Liber Chronicarum* (Augsburg: Johann Schonsperger, 1497).



Scene of Noah's Ark from the 1493 *Nuremberg Chronicle*

styles of the middle ages rather than what may have been the standard dress according to biblical description or historical knowledge. Also, it is quite easy to see which animals in the prints were well-known to the carvers and which were not. Animals such as deer are extremely realistic, while animals such as bears are not at all lifelike. One last interesting detail that becomes evident after an examination of the prints is that many of the works are reminiscent of the great German artist, Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528). This feeling is actually quite accurate, since Albrecht Dürer was an apprentice to Wolgemut at this time and most likely helped with many illustrations. The woodcuts are timeless and exhibit great artistic prowess. One cannot help but admire the talent of the artists after examining any of the large city maps.

Quarta etas mundi

Reges Babilonie

Merodach



Est Merodach fuit primus rex babilonie qui a monarchia assyriorum recedens. non obediuit Assaradon similiter nec rex medorum. Et ob hoc regnum assyriorum defecit regesq; Babilonie ceperunt esse potentes. Ille etiā misit munera Escchie.

Eius scacorum repertur ab Xerxe philozopbo pro correctione Euilmerodach tyranni. qui sapientes et magistros suos occidere consueverat: quo solano retractus fuit a tyrannide ad emendatios.

Nabuchodonosor iste rex babilonie victoriosissimus fuit. eo qd esset virga furoris dñi: ut puniret peccata populoz. obtinuit regnū assyrior qd destructū erat a Medis. Et factus est monarcha qd postea cū feris habitās septē mētib⁹. pcc Danielis i pristina nabuchodonosor fortia septē annis penitus ē restituit. Cui res geste magni cognome dederē. multa cū finitimas bella cōfecit: et q; marie cū egyptijs. ad extremū iudeā deviat. Et syniam durissimo sibi subigavit iugo. Joachim interfecit. et successore cū vasis dñi i babilonē trāstulit. et Sedechia patrui suū loco suo suffecit. Porro dñi vixisset annis quadraginta defunctus est in babilone. relicto eius filio Nabuchodonosore regni successore.

Bilantium vrbs tracie maritima a grec sic noīata. Laccedemonij cōdiderē eā pmo. qb⁹ appollinē p̄sulētib⁹ vbi nā sedes q̄rerēt mādasse oracm memorie: p̄ditū est ut cōtra cecos habitatiōe locaret. Cecos aut megaretes appellati Laccedonis cōditores. Cui cū p̄r in traciā nauigassent: sinuq; vbi postea bsantij edificatū est p̄spexissent. Omīssa tā locupleta rīpa tenuiore regione i asia degissent: ut Strabo refert. Et aut Justin⁹ et Eusebi⁹ ponunt bec ciuitas Anno aī aduentū xpī. 663. In grecia ex opposito calcedonē agri loco quidē optimo et munitissimō a paulama spartanor rege p̄r p̄ditōis sue initij habuit. Et cū p̄ua admodū eēt: postea a Cōstantino magno impatore qd eā adauxit et exornauit Cōstātinopolis dicta. de qua latissime circa sua t̄p̄a deservēnt laude digna.

Bilantium

Nabuchodonosor



City scene with portraits of the Kings from the 1493 Nuremberg Chronicle

Sexta Decollatio Johannis baptiste.



Sexta seculi etas nato domino nostro Iesu christo inchoata est. In principio quadragiesimi secundi anni imperij Augusti cesaris. primo et trigesimo regni herodis alienigene. ac tertio anno centesimo nonagesimo

etate mundi
nagesime tertie olimpiadis. Ab vrbis condita 759. A captiuitate iudeorum. cccc. et quadragintaquinque. A dauid regno. M. lxxi. A natiuitate Abrahæ. 2015. A diluuio noe. 2957. Ab Adam. 5199. A conceptione Johannis baptiste mense sexto. Durabitque per temporis totum quod gratie appellatur. Et protracta est a ipsi Ihesu benedicta natiuitate usque in tempus presens per annos mille quadringentos nonaginta duos. Habebitque decursum usque ad tempora antichristi. aut ad consummationem seculi que nulla generationum aut temporum seculi certa. sed veluti decrepita totius mundi memoria erit finienda. hanc etatem ut scriptum est quidam ab incarnatione christi incipiunt. qui dant a baptismo christi propter vim generationis aquas datam iam circumcisione tam nata. Alij autem a passione. quia iam aperta est paradisi porta. et inchoata est scriptum: quiescentium. Et ex hac sexta etate regimini a fundamentum christianum imperium et sumum pontificium cum laude habuerunt.

Joachim

Cleophas

Anna

Salome

Joseph in su

Desponsatio virginis Marie



Simeon



Alphæus Maria



Maria

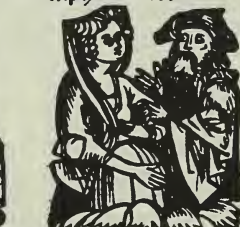


Zebædæus

Annuntiatio dominica



Judas

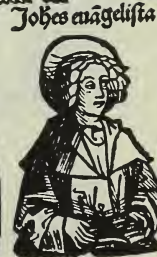
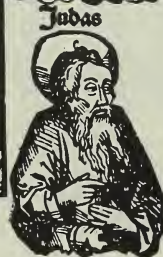


Jacobus minor

Iohes euangelista



Jacobus maior



HYPNEROTOMACHIA POLIPHILI

Another notable example of a printed book which is illustrated with woodblock prints, and which is part of BYU's collection, is Francesco Colonna's (d. 1527) *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*,²² which was printed by the famous Venetian scholar-printer Aldus Manutius (1449/50-1515) in

1499. The ultimate example of Renaissance book illustration, and Aldus's only illustrated book, Colonna's text has remained a disturbing mystery. According to McMurtrie, the text is a "bizarre and curious mixture of pendency and sensualism by a Dominican monk . . . who wrote in Italian mixed with Latin, Greek, and even Hebrew."²³ It tells the strange story of a monk, Poliphilus, who dreams of a journey to find his love, Polia.

However, it is not the text of this work that causes it to be an important example of early printing; rather, it is the artful combination of the text and the illustrations that make it a significant production. McMurtrie continues his description of the work by saying that "*the volume itself, a folio of 234 leaves, displays a harmony of illustration and text which is truly amazing for its day and age and establishes it among the master works of printing of all ages.*"²⁴ This work is an example of how the illustrations should echo the type in their color and weight of line. When both are matched, as in the *Hypnerotomachia*, this harmonious combination attests to the aesthetic talents of both the illustrator and the printer.

The BYU library possesses both Aldine Press editions of the *Hypnerotomachia*, the first edition of 1499, and the second edition printed in 1545.²⁵ In the second edition, the same woodcuts have been used, but without the woodcut initials. In the 1499 edition, there are 170 woodcuts, which include the woodcut initials. This edition contains Aldus's well-known personal trademark, a dolphin, which represents liveliness, and the anchor of slow deliberation - *festina lente*, make haste slowly.

The splendid pure-line woodcuts have been attributed to Giovanni Bellini (d.1516) because his signature appears on some prints. The name of the author of this work is given in an acrostic formed by the first letters of the chapters, all beautifully cut in the Renaissance white vine-leaf manner. Using this formula, the title acrostic spells out *Poliam Frater Franciscus Columna Peramaui*.

BYU's copy of the 1499 edition is bound in gilt tooled morocco. Some interesting physical characteristics of this edition are that the margins of the preliminary leaves are extended; and the preliminary leaves, the errata leaf (that has been repaired), and

²²Francesco Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. (Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1499).

²³McMurtrie, *The Book*, p. 208.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Francesco Colonna, *La Hypnerotomachia di Poliphilo*. (Venice: Paul Manutius, 1545).



Woodblock print from the 1499 *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*.

the priapic leaf are from other browned copies. One other example of a specific point of interest is that the last two letters of the last word in line five of the title on [5a] SANEQVAN appears to have been stamped after an erasure. The 1545 edition is bound in an eighteenth century French green morocco.

The woodcuts from this Aldine edition of the *Hypnerotomachia* were eventually responsible for the dissemination of a taste for the antique in the decorative arts throughout Europe. The great influence of the book, mainly through its pictures, inspired later printers and writers to create their own *Hypnerotomachia*.

Another significant Italian printer of this period is Erhard Ratdolt (1442?-1528). Although Ratdolt was born in Augsburg, Germany, he worked in Venice between 1476-86. Here, with his two partners, Bernhard Maler, the painter, and Peter Loslein, editor and proofreader, Ratdolt was a pioneer in the “*development of ornaments, designed to print in the same form with the type and be sufficient in themselves, not requiring any attention from the hand of the illuminator Some [of the initial letters, borders,*



Woodblock print from the 1499 *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*.

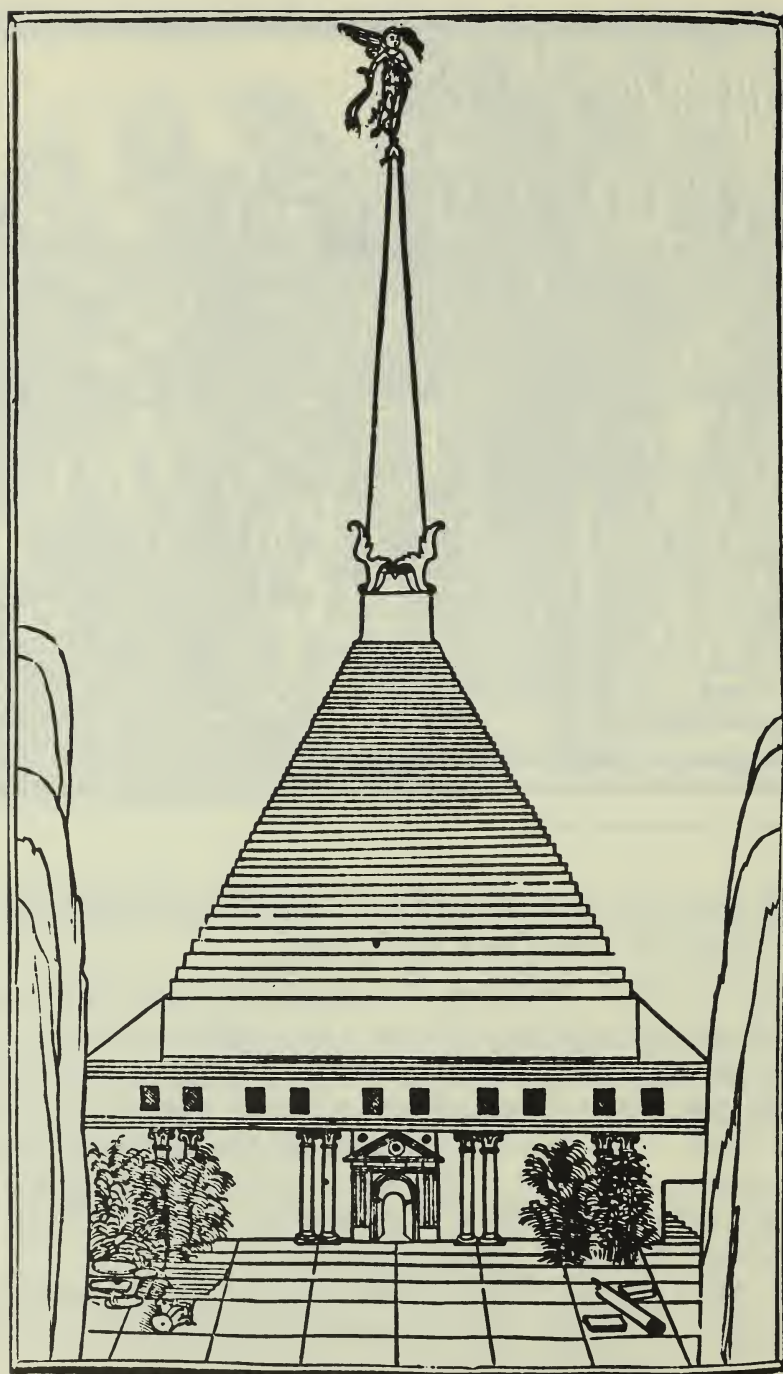
and border units] were done in delicately drawn outline, but the majority were white designs of floral motif against black backgrounds.’²⁶

In addition to Ratdolt’s development of the printed initials and borders, he printed the first title-page and produced the first color-printed diagrams. He was also the first printer to successfully solve the problem of accurately printing mathematical diagrams. The beautiful *editio princeps* of Euclid’s *Elements of Geometry* originated from the presses of Erhard Ratdolt in 1482. McMurtrie writes that “the result of Ratdolt’s efforts was not only successful, but brilliant. The book was adequate mathematically and it was a thing of beauty as well, thanks to the characteristic borders, and initials which this distinguished typographic innovator introduced.”²⁷

In 1485, Ratdolt was extremely busy with the *Sphaera mundi*, by Johannes de Sacro Busto. This work is noteworthy because it contains the earliest diagrams to be printed

²⁶McMurtrie, *The Book*, p. 272.

²⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 283-84.



Woodblock print from the 1499 *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*.



Woodblock print from the 1499 *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*.

in three colors using separate woodcut blocks. The BYU Library is very fortunate to own a copy of this significant Ratdolt edition.

In addition to Ratdolt's Euclid and the *Sphaera mundi*, another impressive example of Erhard Ratdolt's artistry in the BYU Library's collection is the 1480 edition of Werner Rolevinck's (1425-1502) *Fasciculus Temporum*. At the age of twenty-two, Rolevinck became a monk, joining the order of Sainte-Barbe. Of the various works written by Rolevinck, the *Fasciculus Tem-*

FASCICULUS TEMPORUM

porum is his most famous. This work, a chronological history of the world, appeared in numerous editions and translations during the fifty-year period of 1474 to 1532, and established Rolevinck as one of the top historical chronologers of his day. Today the book is not widely read, yet it continues to be noteworthy for its historical significance as well as its artistic merit because of the woodcuts of the Ratdolt edition of 1480.²⁸

The Ratdolt edition of *Fasciculus Temporum* in the BYU Library is printed in single, double, and triple columns, with 49 lines per page. The body of the text corresponds word for word with an edition printed the previous year by Walch. However, in Ratdolt's edition, many additional woodcuts have been supplied for spaces which are left by Walch. Another difference between the two editions is that the account of the death of Charles the Bold is laudatory of Charles and is followed by eight pages of new material in the Ratdolt edition.

The book is printed in Gothic type and is bound in levant morocco. It is also interesting that some of the outline illustrations are colored in gold. The notable woodblock prints in this book consist mainly of depictions of cities such as Jerusalem and Rome, religious scenes such as the Ark of the Covenant, Solomon's temple, the Tower of Babel, and smaller diagrams and initials.

An additional source for the study of woodcuts from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century is the Book of Hours, or *Horae*. Books of Hours were produced by the thousands in manuscript form. One of the principal elements in manuscript Books of Hours is the beautiful illuminations. With the invention of printing, block-print illustrations were substituted for these illuminations.

In her introduction to the *Harvard Library Catalog of French Sixteenth Century Books*, Ruth Mortimer points out that "*in assuming the responsibility for duplicating a text so familiar in manuscript form, the fifteenth-century printer faced all the difficulties of competing with the manuscript, complicated by the fact that the Horae, as the only liturgical volume for the laity, had developed a unique personal character,*

²⁸Werner Rolevinck, *Fasciculus Temporum*. (Venice: Erhard Ratdolt, 1480).

in addition to being lavishly illustrated. On the other hand, the need for multiple copies was apparent. Although Horae were printed elsewhere, the Paris printers were the acknowledged masters of the trade and supplied the variant texts for the use of local dioceses in France, England, and other countries, as well as the authorized Rome use."²⁹

Books of Hours cannot be simply classified as prayer books. Of course, the outlining of certain rituals is a major part of the work, but a "typical" Book of Hours includes much more. A Book of Hours can be generally divided into three textual subheadings. First, there are the essential texts. These include the Calendar, which indicates the days for celebrating feasts of the Church and the saints; the Little Office of Hours of the Virgin, each Hour consisting of an opening verse and response, followed by the psalms and hymns, divided by verses, responses, and prayers; the Seven Penitential Psalms; the Litany, or a liturgical prayer for help; the Office of the Dead, or the prayers said over the coffin during the wake-night or vigils before burial; and the Suffrages of the Saints, or short devotions to patronal or personal saints.

Next, there are the secondary texts. These includes passages from the four gospels which describe the coming of Christ; the account of the Passion; two special prayers to the Virgin; a number of short alternative Offices, the Hours of the Cross, of the Holy Spirit and of the Holy Trinity; the Fifteen Joys of the Virgin; and the Seven Requests to the Savior. Finally, there are the accessory texts. These include extracts from the Psalter, and miscellaneous prayers.³⁰

The main purpose of a Book of Hours, as expressed by John Harthan, "*was to provide every class of the laity from kings and royal dukes down to prosperous burghers and their wives with personal prayerbooks. All literate people, and even some who could not read, aspired to own one . . . Books of Hours were the vehicle both of intellectual Christianity at its loftiest and of popular devotion on the most primitive level.*"³¹

With the invention of printing from movable type, publications became available to a larger public who were unable or unwilling to spend so much money for costly manuscript copies. The more luxurious Books of Hours were printed on vellum, while others were printed on paper. Whereas the manuscript copies were illustrated with individually painted miniatures, the printed editions were illustrated with woodcuts, as heretofore mentioned. However, these cuts were often illuminated or colored by hand, and decorated by a rubricator, or one who creates a heading of a part of a book or manuscript done or underlined in a color such as red or gold that is different from the rest, to imitate the earlier manuscripts. Some of the great pioneers in the printing

²⁹Harvard College Library Department of Printing And Graphic Arts Catalogue of Books and Manuscripts, Part I: French 16th Century Books, Volume II. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 363.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 14-19.

³¹John Harthan, *The Book of Hours*. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1977), p. 31.

of Books of Hours include the French publishers Antoine Verard (d. ca. 1513); Simon Vostre (fl. 1507-1515); Geoffroy Tory (1480?-?1533); and Philippe Pigouchet (fl. 1501-1510).

Pigouchet, who was both a publisher and a printer, published his first Book of Hours in 1491. Many subsequent editions were published as well. The BYU Library owns the famous 1502 edition.³² This is one of the most important editions of Pigouchet's *Horae*.

Each page of the book has woodcut borders and illustrations. Included in the work are 17 full page cuts as well as the Dance of Death sequence which is quite common in many Books of Hours.

An interesting woodcut found in Pigouchet's *Horae* is the zodiacal or astrological man that precedes the calendar. As explained by John Harthan, the Astrological Man "is often shown as a skeleton or an eviscerated corpse, with a jester in cap and bells crouching between his feet, to symbolize the human brain and its vagaries under the influence of the moon. The jester looks at the moon and points to his fool's cap in allusion to lunar madness. In the corners of the text are smaller pictures representing the four temperaments or 'humours.' The whole design summarizes in pictorial form current [(late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century)] medical belief concerning the influence of the planets and signs of the zodiac upon different parts of the human body."³³ This woodcut is also illuminated. Capital letters have been added by a rubricator in blue, red, and gold. The BYU copy is printed on vellum.

A second important Book of Hours in the BYU Library's collection is *Les Heures de la Vierge*, or the *Hours of the Virgin*, printed by Germain Hardouyn.³⁴

The title page of this work shows two cupids supporting a shield with the mark "G" on it. Two pages of verse are then followed by the Astrological Man, and then an almanac listing. The next page begins the Calendar which occupies the twelve succeeding pages. The printer's device, the Skeleton, or Astrological Man, and the sixteen large and twenty small cuts are all illuminated. There are no engraved borders, but each page has been illuminated so as to include borders of foliage and flowers on a gold-colored background. The initials have also been illuminated.

PIGOUCHET'S BOOK OF HOURS

HARDOUYN'S BOOK OF HOURS

³²Catholic Church, *Horae* (Paris: Philippe Pigouchet, 1502).

³³Harthan, *The Book of Hours*, p. 170.

³⁴Catholic Church, *Horae ad usum romanum* (Paris: Germain Hardouyn, 1530).



The "Astrological Man", a woodcut reproduced from Philippe Pigouchet's *Book of Hours*. (Paris, 1502)

The subjects of the illuminated woodcuts include the creation of Eve from the rib of Adam, the Annunciation, Nativity, Adoration of the Magi, Crucifixion, and other scenes from the life of the Virgin or of Christ. Other biblical scenes are also depicted, such as when David spied Bathsheba bathing, the Raising of Lazarus, and the Day of Pentecost. The colors are still very vivid and the illuminations are extremely detailed. The work is printed on vellum and bound in gilt-tooled morocco.

According to a contemporary manuscript note on the end page of this book, it was printed in Paris during the reign of King Francois I (1494-1547), around 1530. The note also explains that this book is an imitation of the numerous manuscript Books of Hours already available, yet this printed edition is more readily available and less expensive. It also points out that although this book has been block-printed, the illustrations have been illuminated to add to the beauty of the work.

A third example from the Library's collection is Thielman Kerver's (d.1522) *Hours of the Virgin*, printed in Paris in 1512.³⁵ This Book of Hours is printed on 152 vellum leaves with gothic type in red and black. Kerver's unicorn device appears at the end of the work. In contrast to Hardouyn's Book of Hours, each page of text in this work has been printed with an elaborate metalcut border. There are a total of 19 large metalcuts, 34 smaller cuts, and 12 cuts which appear in the Calendar. As is common, the initials and capital letters have been rubricated in gold and various other colors. The work is bound in nineteenth-century black straight-grain morocco with gilded edges.

KERVER'S BOOK OF HOURS

Within this Book of Hours are many beautifully illuminated woodcuts. The subjects of these illustrations include the Betrayal, Instruments of the Passion, Anointing of David, Tree of Jesse, Annunciation, Visitation, Nativity, Shepherds, Magi, Presentation, Flight into Egypt, Coronation of the Virgin, Trinity, Raising of Lazarus, David and Bathsheba, Pentecost, Crucifixion, and Virgin and Emblems. In addition to these artfully done block-prints, are the illuminated borders of the textual pages. The Calendar borders include a set of the Occupations, and the borders throughout the rest of the book contain such scenes as the Life and Passion of Christ, the Apocalypse, a Dance of Death, and animals, rustic figures and plants.

Such exquisite fifteenth-century block-printing used for illustrating works like the Books of Hours, was not confined to France. In Italy many beautiful woodcut illustrations were also made at this time. Some of these significant illustrations appear within the religious works of the famous Florentine monk and reformer, Girolamo

³⁵Catholic Church, *Horae* (Paris, Thielman Kerver, 1512).



Scene of Christ on the cross from Thielman Kerver's *Hours of the Virgin*. (Paris, 1512)

Savonarola (1452-1498). Besides his work toward religious reform and his warnings against the frivolous attitudes of his day (for which Savonarola was eventually martyred), he left many religious works which are illustrated by woodcuts that are “wonderful specimens in black and white, all showing incidents in the life of the Prior and of Florence. These woodcuts bring back before our eyes the habits and customs of the fifteenth century with amazing clearness.”³⁶

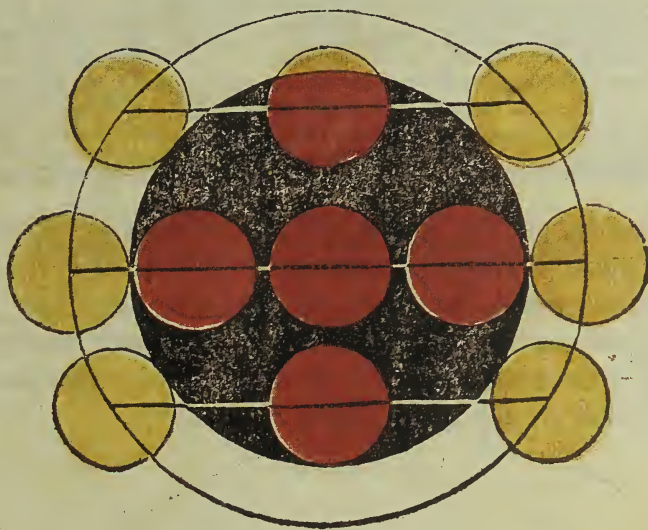
Among the Library’s holdings of the works of Savonarola are many which contain very beautiful examples of the clean simplicity of Italian woodcuts. One example, *Epistole a diversi* . . . contains three significant illustrations.³⁷ The first of these illustrations is a woodcut of a wayfarer kneeling in prayer before a crucifix. There is also an illustration of the cruci-

EPISTOLE A DIVERSI . . .



Italian woodcut from Savonarola's 1497 *Epistole a Diversi*. It depicts a wayfarer kneeling in prayer before a crucifix.

diagonalis quadranguli cui⁹ latera sūt diuersitates aspectus in
longitudine & latitudine. Diuersitas aspectus lunę ad solē est
excessus diuersitatis aspect⁹ Lunę sup diuersitatē aspectus solis
Si uera cōiunctio luminariū fuerit inter gradum eclipticę ascē
dentē & nonagesimū eius ab ascendente: uisibilis eorū cōiun/
ctio p̄cessit uerā. Si autē inter eundē nonagesimū & gradū oc
cidentē fuerit: uisibilis uerā seque^r. Sed si in eodē gradu nona
gesimo acciderit tūc simul uisibilis cōiūctio cū uera fiet nulla^q
diuersitas aspect⁹ in longitudine cōtinget. Nonagesim⁹ nanq³
gradus eclipticę ab ascendēte semp ē in circulo p̄ zenith & po/
los zodiaci p̄cedēte. Latitudo lunę uisā ē arcus circuli magni
THEORICA ECLIPSIS LVNARIS.



fixion. The third woodcut illustration is that of a ladder and a cross with inscriptions. The inscriptions on the ladder concern the seven virtues. Each of these illustrations reflect the teachings of Savonarola. He felt that by thinking of death, and, as a natural consequence of such thoughts, the life after, men would be prone to turn to the healing power of the crucifixion and to live more virtuous lives in preparation for unavoidable death.

Another of Savonarola's works in BYU's collection, *De Simplicitate, Christianae Vitae*, was published in 1512.³⁸ In this work there are two woodcuts. The first is one of the most famous illustrations found in Savonarola's books and is of Savonarola himself sitting in his cell. This illustration is accurately described by Piero Misciattelli (1882-1937):

DE SIMPLICITE CHRISTIANAE VITAE

*In front of him is the Crucifix, from which he derives all his great ideals for the reform of the Church. He gazes attentively at the page he has just written, and with his forefinger points to each word. His pen is in his left hand and near him is a clepsydra which measures the fleeting time. On a stand near the door lie his cloak and the Cross which he carries about with him together with several large books and a manuscript. The peace which he finds in his little white cell, with light coming in from above, is in strong contrast to the feverish intensity of his intellectual work as a man of action, a man who at the zenith of his fame and power was able to sway multitudes.*³⁹

The second woodcut is of the virgin Mary and appears on the final leaf of this work. This book is printed in Gothic type and includes woodcut initials. These Savonarolian woodcuts, and the others that have been previously discussed show how "*the illustrators chose their subjects not only from the Old and New Testaments, but from the worship and daily life of the Christians, so being thus introduced into the homes of the people we are better able to study the customs of that time.*"⁴⁰

³⁸Piero Misciattelli, *Savonarola*. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1930), p. 138.

³⁹Girolamo Savonarola, *Epistole a Diversi* (Florence: Bartolommeo di Libri, 1497).

⁴⁰Girolamo Savonarola, *De Simplicitate Christianae Vitae*. (Venice: Lazarus Sordus, 1512).

³⁹Misciattelli, *Savonarola*, p. 138.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 141.



Eum privilegio.

Scene of Savonarola sitting in a cell. From his 1512 *De Simplicite Christianae Vitae*



"The Adoration of the Magi", an illuminated woodcut from Germain Hardouyn's *Book of Hours*. (Paris, 1530)

DEus qui beatū sebastianū martyre tuū in tua fide & dilectione tā ardentē solidasti vt nullis carnalib⁹ blandimētis nullis tyrānorū minis nullisq; carnificū gladijs siue sagittis aut tormētis a tua cultura potuit reuocari: da nobis miseris p̄tōrib⁹ dignis ei⁹ meritis & intercessio nib⁹ in tribulatiōe auxiliū in p̄secutione solatiū & in oī t̄p̄e cōtra pestē epydimie remediū qua tin⁹ possum⁹ contra oēs diabolicas insidias viri liter dimicare mundum & ea q̄ in eo sunt despicere & nulla eius aduersa formidare vt ea que te inspirante desideram⁹ valeam⁹ obtinere. Per.

De pluribus martyribus. ān. Isti sunt sc̄i qui p̄ dei amore minas hoīm contēpserūt sc̄i martyres ī regno celorū exultāt cū angelis. O q̄ preciosa est mors sc̄torū q̄ assidue assistūt āte dñm & ab inuicē nō sunt separati. ꝑ. Exultēt iusti in cōspectu dei. ꝑ. Et delectantur in leticia. Oñs.

DEus q̄ nos cōcedis sc̄torū martyru tuorū N & N suffragijs adiuuari: da nobis ī eterna beatitudine de eorū societate gaudere. Per.

De sancto nicolao. ān.



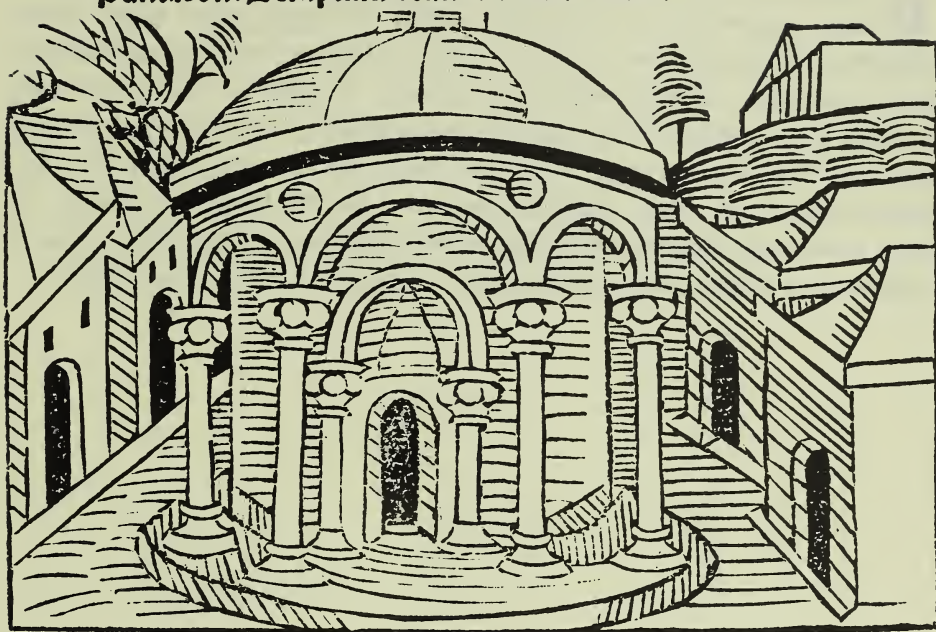
Amic⁹ dei nicola⁹ pō tificali decoratus infu la oībus se amabilē exhibuit. ꝑ. Ora p̄ nobis b̄tē nicolae. ꝑ. Vt digni efficiamur p̄mis sionibus x̄pi. Oratio.

DEus q̄ beatū nicolaū pontificē tuū innumeris decora sti miraculis tribue nobis q̄s: vt ei⁹ meritis &



Final page from the 1480 Ratdolt edition of Werner Rolevinck's *Fasciculus Temporum*.

Pantheon. Templum omniū deorum latine.



The "Pantheon", a woodcut illustration from the 1480 Ratdolt edition of Werner Rolevinck's *Fasciculus Temporum*.

Block-printing eventually gave way to the processes of engraving, with creative illustrations overpowering the woodcutters' pattern of copying extant works. Modern artists even illustrate with pen or brush on paper, and then reproduce those illustrations photo-mechanically. Although woodcuts are still used, this practice is not common today. The block-prints and block-books that have been described should not be revered merely because of their historical significance; these prints must be highly esteemed for their artistic merits as well. These, and other examples in the BYU Library's Collections, provide a resource for students and scholars to study first hand the beginnings of the art of printing as well as the art of illustration as developed in the early centuries.



Friends of the Brigham Young University Library Newsletter
Number 28, 1986
Published by the Friends
Harold B. Lee Library, Provo, Utah 84602